No. 10

My Own ROMANCE

10

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MY OWN ROMANCE #19

OH, BLAIN, FORGIVE ME--WHEREVER YOU ARE! I LOVE YOU, BLAIN! THIS WAS FOR US...THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN...THE WAY IT STILL COULD BE IF WE WEREN'T A COUPLE OF FOOLISH KIDS!

WHEN A GIRL'S HUSBAND MAKES ONE MISTAKE, SHOULD THE GIRL TRY TO SAVE HER MARRIAGE, OR SHOULD SHE LEAVE HIM, FOREVER! THAT WAS THE PROBLEM I WAS FACED WITH; BUT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE TWO PATHS TO FOLLOW...

I CHOSE THE WRONG PATH!

A TRUE LIFE STORY

6463

THIS WAS THE END! I WATCHED HIM PLAY THE ROLE I HAD CREATED FOR HIM, BUT I KNEW HE WASN'T ACTING! THE ACTRESS HE HELD IN HIS ARMS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ME!

THE DRAMA OF LIFE IS GREATER, MORE CRUEL THAN ANY INVENTED BY HUMAN MINDS! THIS PLAY WAS OURS--BLAIN SUTTON'S AND MINE--BUT NOW IT'S AN EMPTY, BITTER FARCE!

I WALKED QUIETLY OUT OF THE THEATER WITH THE FUTILE CLIMAX OF OUR MARRIAGE STILL POIGNANT IN MY MEMORY...

I GUESS THIS IS CURTAINS FOR US...FOR KEEPS! I'M STILL YOUNG AND ATTRACTIVE--I CAN STILL WRITE! PERHAPS I'LL MAKE A NEW LIFE WITHOUT HIM!

EXIT

I'D MET BLAIN SUTTON WHEN HE WAS THE COUNTRY'S MATINEE IDOL AND I WAS A STARRY-EYED COLLEGE GIRL WITH IDEAS ABOUT PLAYWRITING...

I'VE WAITED ALL SEASON FOR BLAIN SUTTON'S AUTOGRAPH! IF I DON'T GET IT THIS TIME I'LL POSITIVELY FAINT!

IF YOU FAINT IN THIS MOB, YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT STANDING UP! I DON'T THINK OUR HERO IS GOING TO SHOW UP AT ALL!

STAGE ENTRANCE

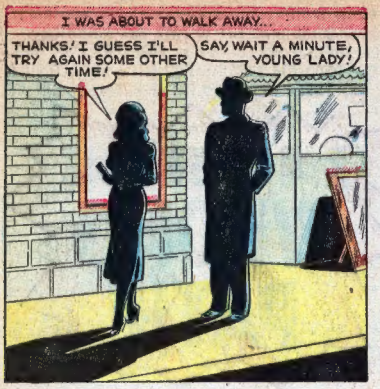
HE DIDN'T MAKE AN APPEARANCE, AND THE CROWD MELTED AWAY AS I WALKED SADLY TO THE FRONT OF THE THEATER...

PARDON ME, SIR! CAN YOU TELL ME IF BLAIN SUTTON IS STILL IN THE THEATER? I'VE BEEN WAITING HOURS FOR HIM!

YOU DO LOOK RATHER DESPERATE! SUTTON WILL DO ANYTHING TO AVOID THE AUTOGRAPH HOUNDS! I THINK HE LEFT BY A SIDE ENTRANCE!

PRESENTS

NOW PLAYING

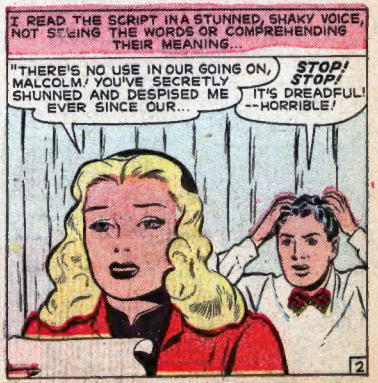

I WAS ABOUT TO WALK AWAY...
THANKS! I GUESS I'LL TRY AGAIN SOME OTHER TIME!
SAY, WAIT A MINUTE, YOUNG LADY!

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT MAYBE I COULD ARRANGE A MEETING FOR YOU! I WORK IN THE THEATER, AND I KNOW SUTTON PRETTY WELL!
OHHH, COULD YOU? COULD YOU REALLY?

SUTTON'S RUNNING OVER A FEW ROUGH SPOTS IN THE PLAY TOMORROW! WHY DON'T YOU DROP AROUND SHORTLY BEFORE LUNCH?
I'LL BE THERE! I'LL BE THERE LONG BEFORE LUNCH! THANKS! THANKS A MILLION!

I WAS THERE AT 9:30 SHARP WITH MY HEART BEATING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER! TWO HOURS PASSED SLOWLY, AND THEN...
RIGHT ON TIME, I SEE! HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING LONG?
WH...?? OH--ER, NO! I JUST GOT HERE THIS MINUTE!

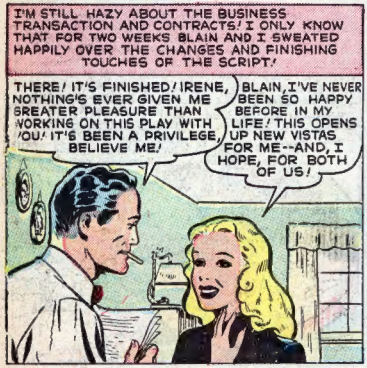
BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, I WAS ON THE STAGE AND A MAN WAS PLACING A SCRIPT IN MY HAND...
TAKE THAT SCRIPT AND START READING, MISS! WE'LL KNOW IN A FEW MINUTES WHETHER YOU HAVE TALENT OR NOT!
BUT, BUT... I...


I READ THE SCRIPT IN A STUNNED, SHAKY VOICE, NOT SEEING THE WORDS OR COMPREHENDING THEIR MEANING...
"THERE'S NO USE IN OUR GOING ON, MALCOLM! YOU'VE SECRETLY SHUNNED AND DESPISED ME EVER SINCE OUR...
STOP! STOP!
IT'S DREADFUL! --HORRIBLE!

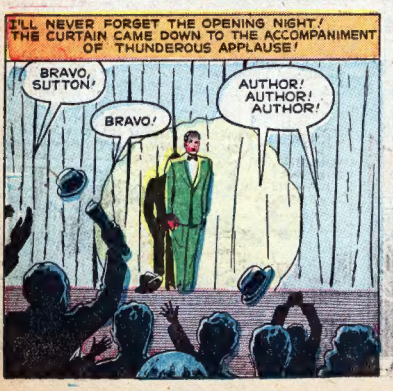
MISS, I'M BLAIN SUTTON! AND I TRY TO AVOID MY MORE ARDENT ADMIRERS FOR EXACTLY THE SAME REASON I'M INTERRUPTING YOU NOW! WHATEVER YOUR PLANS WERE FOR THE STAGE, FORGET THEM! YOU'LL NEVER BE AN ACTRESS!
YOU! BLAINE SUTTON! OH... WHAT A DESPICABLE TRICK TO PLAY!
MY BREATH CAME IN GASPS AS I MUSTERED ALL MY STRENGTH AND PRIDE FOR AN ANSWER...
NOW, YOU LISTEN, MISTER BLAIN SUTTON! I DIDN'T COME HERE TO TAKE A STAGE TEST AND IF YOU HAD HALF THE MANNERS YOU AFFECT ON THE STAGE, YOU WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO FIND OUT! I'M A PLAYWRIGHT!
A PLAYWRIGHT! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'M AT A LOSS FOR WORDS!
I SENSED MY ADVANTAGE AND WALKED OUT WHILE THE WALKING WAS GOOD...
WAIT A MOMENT! PLEASE WAIT! I THOUGHT YOU WERE ANOTHER STAGE-STRUCK KID!
WHEW! WHAT AN EXIT!
I WAS HOME BEFORE I REALIZED MY BRIEFCASE WAS MISSING! I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I LOST IT, NOR DID I CARE!
(SOB! SOB!) OH, WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO EVEN ATTEMPT SUCH A CHILDISH APPROACH! I'VE LOST EVERYTHING--MY SCRIPT, MY DIGNITY, MY OPPORTUNITY! I HATE BLAIN SUTTON! I HATE HIM!
A WEEK LATER, AS I WAS LEAVING MY APARTMENT...
MISS DORSET, WAIT A MOMENT! DON'T CLOSE THAT DOOR YET!
WH...? BLAIN SUTTON!
KNOWING YOUR COLOSSAL EGO, MR. SUTTON, I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'VE COME TO APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR OAFISH BEHAVIOR LAST WEEK!
YOU'RE WRONG, MISS DORSET! NOT ONLY HAVE I COME TO APOLOGIZE, BUT TO PAY MY MOST SINCERE TRIBUTE TO A FINE PLAYWRIGHT!
THAT'S RIGHT, KIDDO!
3

I STOOD THERE PERPLEXED AND SUSPICIOUS! WAS THIS THE OPENING OF SOME CRUEL HOAX?
PLAYWRIGHT? BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
MISS DORSET, I'M PHIL LAUREN, MR. SUTTON'S AGENT! LAST WEEK YOU INADVERTENTLY LEFT A MANUSCRIPT AT THE THEATER! THAT MANUSCRIPT IS ONE OF THE FINEST DRAMATIC PLAYS I'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME!

STILL STUNNED, I FOUND MYSELF IN THE APARTMENT LISTENING IN AMAZED INCREDULITY!
THIS IS THE WORK OF A SKILLED PLAYWRIGHT, MISS DORSET! IT CONTAINS ALL THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS FOR A SMASH HIT!
IT NEEDS SOME MINOR CHANGES BUT I WANT TO DO THIS PLAY, MISS DORSET! IT WAS WRITTEN FOR ME! IT'S THE TYPE OF THING I'VE BEEN LONGING TO FIND!

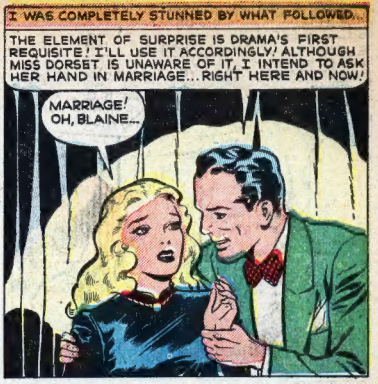

I'M STILL HAZY ABOUT THE BUSINESS TRANSACTION AND CONTRACTS! I ONLY KNOW THAT FOR TWO WEEKS BLAIN AND I SWEATED HAPPILY OVER THE CHANGES AND FINISHING TOUCHES OF THE SCRIPT!
THERE! IT'S FINISHED! IRENE, NOTHING'S EVER GIVEN ME GREATER PLEASURE THAN WORKING ON THIS PLAY WITH YOU! IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE, BELIEVE ME!
BLAIN, I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY BEFORE IN MY LIFE! THIS OPENS UP NEW VISTAS FOR ME--AND, I HOPE, FOR BOTH OF US!

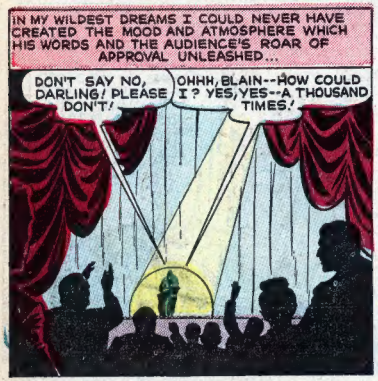
HERE'S TO THE TEAM OF DORSET AND SUTTON! MAY THEIR CAREERS REACH THE PINNACLE OF SUCCESS TOGETHER!
AND HERE'S HOPING YOUR STOMACH DOESN'T TURN WHEN YOU TASTE THAT COFFEE! IT WAS COLD FOUR HOURS AGO!

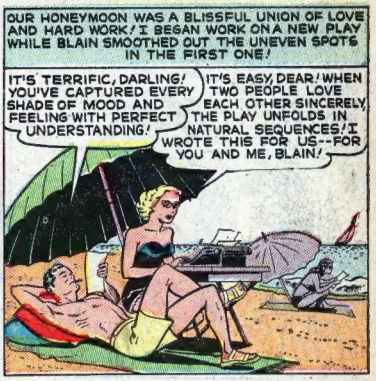

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE OPENING NIGHT! THE CURTAIN CAME DOWN TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE!
BRAVO, SUTTON!
BRAVO!
AUTHOR! AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

I WAS LITERALLY DRAGGED ONSTAGE BY BLAIN...
BLAIN, YOU IDIOT! STOP! I'LL DIE OF EMBARRASSMENT!
SHHH! YOU MUST HEED THE PLEAS OF YOUR PUBLIC! YOU'RE A SUCCESS!

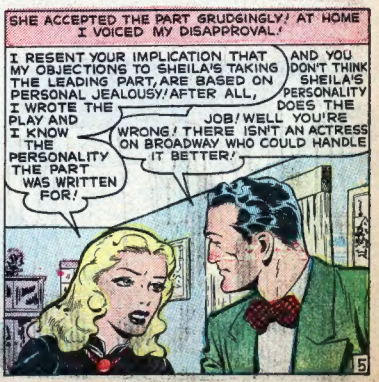
I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR THE WONDERFUL RECEPTION YOU'VE GIVEN THE PLAY! I THINK, HOWEVER, THAT ALL THE CREDIT MUST BE GIVEN TO ITS AUTHOR, MISS IRENE DORSET, WHOSE EFFORTS AND TALENT HAVE CREATED THIS DRAMA!
BRAVO, MISS DORSET! BRAVO!

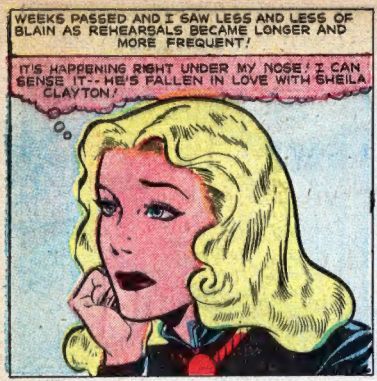

I WAS COMPLETELY STUNNED BY WHAT FOLLOWED..
THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS DRAMA'S FIRST REQUISITE! I'LL USE IT ACCORDINGLY! ALTHOUGH MISS DORSET IS UNAWARE OF IT, I INTEND TO ASK HER HAND IN MARRIAGE... RIGHT HERE AND NOW!
MARRIAGE! OH, BLAINE...

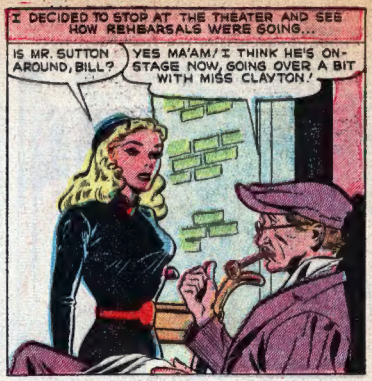

IN MY WILDEST DREAMS I COULD NEVER HAVE CREATED THE MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE WHICH HIS WORDS AND THE AUDIENCE'S ROAR OF APPROVAL UNLEASHED...
DON'T SAY NO, DARLING! PLEASE DON'T!
OHHH, BLAIN--HOW COULD I? YES, YES--A THOUSAND TIMES!


OUR HONEYMOON WAS A BLISSFUL UNION OF LOVE AND HARD WORK! I BEGAN WORK ON A NEW PLAY WHILE BLAIN SMOOTHED OUT THE UNEVEN SPOTS IN THE FIRST ONE!
IT'S TERRIFIC, DARLING! YOU'VE CAPTURED EVERY SHADE OF MOOD AND FEELING WITH PERFECT UNDERSTANDING!
IT'S EASY, DEAR! WHEN TWO PEOPLE LOVE EACH OTHER SINCERELY, THE PLAY UNFOLDS IN NATURAL SEQUENCES! I WROTE THIS FOR US--FOR YOU AND ME, BLAIN!

BACK IN NEW YORK THE PLAY GOT PHIL LAUREN'S RAVE APPROVAL, AND CASTING BEGAN ALONG WITH TROUBLE!
THE PLAY WAS WRITTEN FOR YOU, SHEILA! YOU'LL GIVE IT LIFE, AUTHENTICITY, AND BRILLIANCE! DON'T SAY NO!
I DON'T KNOW, BLAIN! WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO IRENE'S TALENTS, I DON'T THINK THE PLAY IS ESPECIALLY SUITED TO MY ABILITIES!

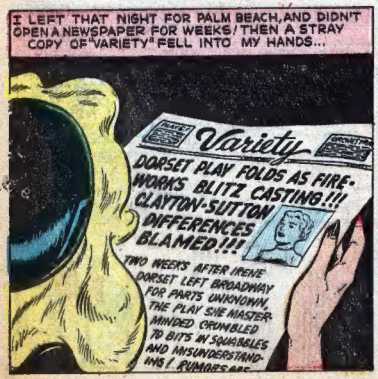

SHE ACCEPTED THE PART GRUDGINGLY! AT HOME I VOICED MY DISAPPROVAL!
I RESENT YOUR IMPLICATION THAT MY OBJECTIONS TO SHEILA'S TAKING THE LEADING PART, ARE BASED ON PERSONAL JEALOUSY! AFTER ALL, I WROTE THE PLAY AND I KNOW THE PERSONALITY THE PART WAS WRITTEN FOR!
AND YOU DON'T THINK SHEILA'S PERSONALITY DOES THE JOB! WELL YOU'RE WRONG! THERE ISN'T AN ACTRESS ON BROADWAY WHO COULD HANDLE IT BETTER!

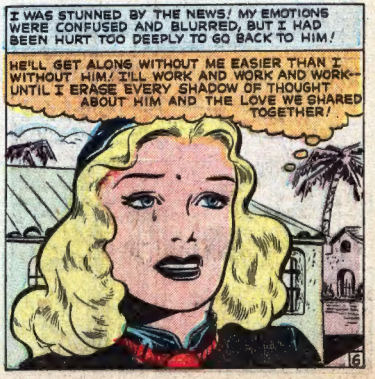

WEEKS PASSED AND I SAW LESS AND LESS OF BLAIN AS REHEARSALS BECAME LONGER AND MORE FREQUENT!
IT'S HAPPENING RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE! I CAN SENSE IT--HE'S FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SHEILA CLAYTON!

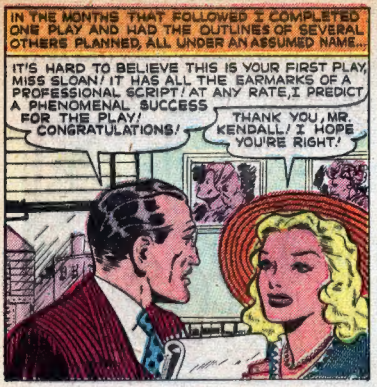

I DECIDED TO STOP AT THE THEATER AND SEE HOW REHEARSALS WERE GOING...
IS MR. SUTTON AROUND, BILL?
YES MA'AM, I THINK HE'S ON-STAGE NOW, GOING OVER A BIT WITH MISS CLAYTON!

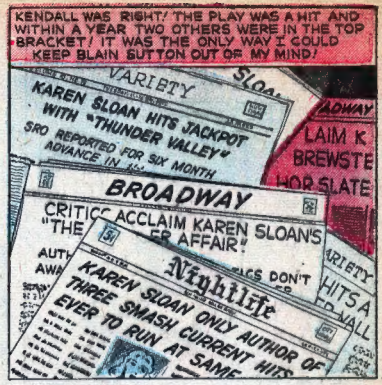
I WALKED ONSTAGE AND STOPPED IN SURPRISE!
WH...? ER...I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT...

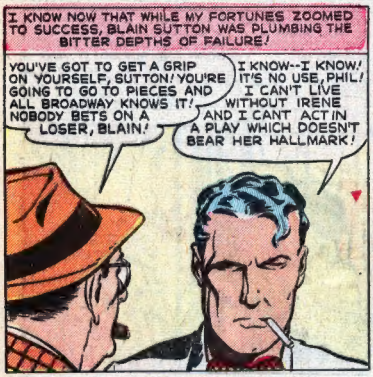
THIS IS VERY INTERESTING! I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY YOU'RE REHEARSING, BUT IT SO HAPPENS I DON'T RECALL WRITING SUCH A SCENE INTO THE PLAY!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, IRENE, WE WONDERED IF IT WOULD HELP THE SECOND ACT... IT WAS JUST AN EXPERIMENT!
THAT'S RIGHT, AN EXPERIMENT!


I LEFT THAT NIGHT FOR PALM BEACH, AND DIDN'T OPEN A NEWSPAPER FOR WEEKS! THEN A STRAY COPY OF "VARIETY" FELL INTO MY HANDS...
Variety
DORSET PLAY FOLDS AS FIRE-WORKS BLITZ CASTING!!!
CLAYTON-SUTTON DIFFERENCES BLAMED!!!
TWO WEEKS AFTER IRENE DORSET LEFT BROADWAY FOR PARTS UNKNOWN, THE PLAY SHE MASTER-MINDED CRUMBLED TO BITS IN SQUABBLES AND MISUNDERSTAND-INGS! RUMORS ARE-


I WAS STUNNED BY THE NEWS! MY EMOTIONS WERE CONFUSED AND BLURRED, BUT I HAD BEEN HURT TOO DEEPLY TO GO BACK TO HIM!
HE'LL GET ALONG WITHOUT ME EASIER THAN I WITHOUT HIM! I'LL WORK AND WORK AND WORK--UNTIL I ERASE EVERY SHADOW OF THOUGHT ABOUT HIM AND THE LOVE WE SHARED TOGETHER!
15


IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED I COMPLETED ONE PLAY AND HAD THE OUTLINES OF SEVERAL OTHERS PLANNED, ALL UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME...
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THIS IS YOUR FIRST PLAY, MISS SLOAN! IT HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF A PROFESSIONAL SCRIPT! AT ANY RATE, I PREDICT A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS FOR THE PLAY! CONGRATULATIONS!
THANK YOU, MR. KENDALL! I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT!

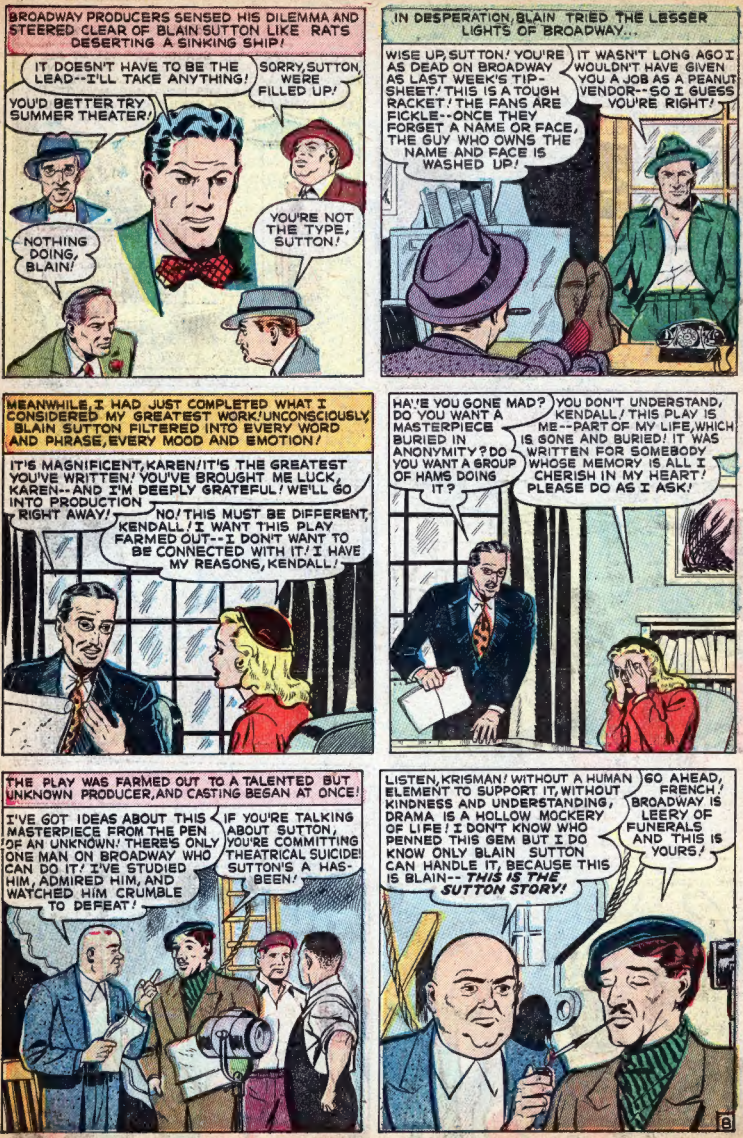

KENDALL WAS RIGHT! THE PLAY WAS A HIT AND WITHIN A YEAR TWO OTHERS WERE IN THE TOP BRACKET! IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD KEEP BLAIN SUTTON OUT OF MY MIND!
VARIETY
KAREN SLOAN HITS JACKPOT WITH "THUNDER VALLEY"
BROADWAY
CRITICS ACCLAIM KAREN SLOAN'S
Nightlife
KAREN SLOAN ONLY AUTHOR OF THREE SMASH CURRENT HITS
EVER TO RUN AT SAME

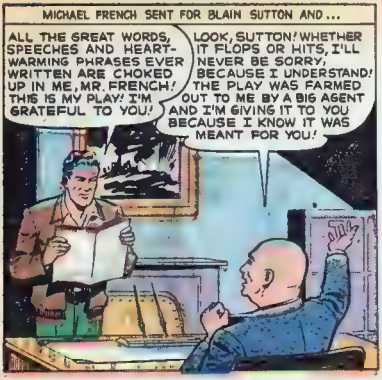

I KNOW NOW THAT WHILE MY FORTUNES ZOOMED TO SUCCESS, BLAIN SUTTON WAS PLUMBING THE BITTER DEPTHS OF FAILURE!
YOU'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, SUTTON! YOU'RE GOING TO GO TO PIECES AND ALL BROADWAY KNOWS IT! NOBODY BETS ON A LOSER, BLAIN!
I KNOW--I KNOW! IT'S NO USE, PHIL! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IRENE AND I CANT ACT IN A PLAY WHICH DOESN'T BEAR HER HALLMARK!

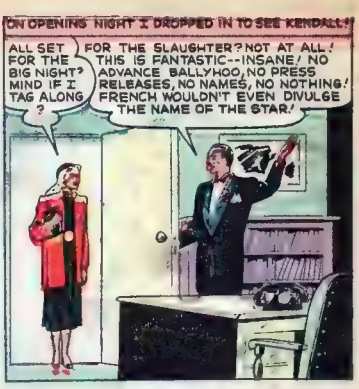
YOU'VE GOT ONLY YOURSELF TO BLAME, SUTTON! YOU LET IRENE WILT WHILE YOU WENT SPINNING FOR SHEILA CLAYTON'S PHONY CHARMS! GET OUT OF TOWN, SUTTON! START DOING SUMMER STOCK UNTIL YOU'RE READY TO MAKE A COMEBACK!
NONSENSE! THERE ISN'T A PRODUCER ON BROADWAY WHO WOULDN'T GRAB ME FOR A LEAD! I MAY BE CARRYING A TORCH, BUT I'M NOT THROUGH!

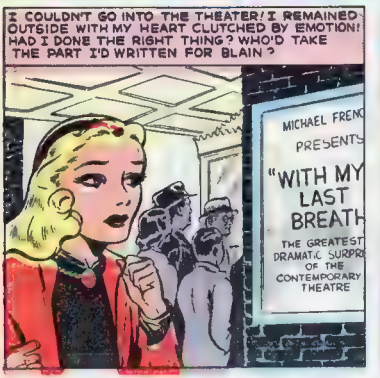
YOU THINK SO, EH? OKAY, GET DOWN TO THE STRAND AND ASK JOE MITCHNER FOR THE LEAD IN HIS NEW PLAY!
ALL RIGHT, I WILL! AND WHAT'S MORE, I'LL GET IT!

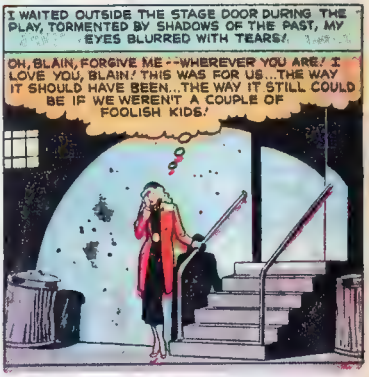
AT THE STRAND...
OF COURSE, I'D LIKE A MORE SOPHISTICATED VEHICLE, BUT THIS WILL DO!
WILL IT? I'M SORRY, SUTTON! I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND A BETTER PLAY SOMEWHERE ELSE! THE LEAD'S ALREADY GIVEN OUT!

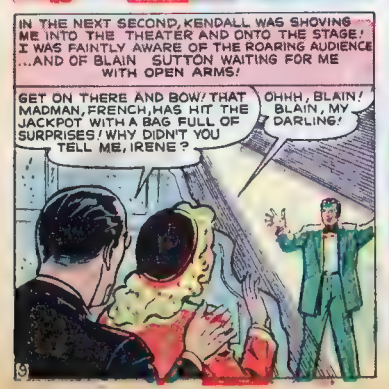

BROADWAY PRODUCERS SENSED HIS DILEMMA AND STEERED CLEAR OF BLAIN SUTTON LIKE RATS DESERTING A SINKING SHIP!
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE LEAD--I'LL TAKE ANYTHING!
SORRY, SUTTON, WERE FILLED UP!
YOU'D BETTER TRY SUMMER THEATER!
NOTHING DOING, BLAIN!
YOU'RE NOT THE TYPE, SUTTON!
IN DESPERATION, BLAIN TRIED THE LESSER LIGHTS OF BROADWAY...
WISE UP, SUTTON! YOU'RE AS DEAD ON BROADWAY AS LAST WEEK'S TIP-SHEET! THIS IS A TOUGH RACKET! THE FANS ARE FICKLE--ONCE THEY FORGET A NAME OR FACE, THE GUY WHO OWNS THE NAME AND FACE IS WASHED UP!
IT WASN'T LONG AGO I WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN YOU A JOB AS A PEANUT VENDOR--SO I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT!
MEANWHILE, I HAD JUST COMPLETED WHAT I CONSIDERED MY GREATEST WORK! UNCONSCIOUSLY, BLAIN SUTTON FILTERED INTO EVERY WORD AND PHRASE, EVERY MOOD AND EMOTION!
IT'S MAGNIFICENT, KAREN! IT'S THE GREATEST YOU'VE WRITTEN! YOU'VE BROUGHT ME LUCK, KAREN--AND I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL! WE'LL GO INTO PRODUCTION RIGHT AWAY!
NO! THIS MUST BE DIFFERENT, KENDALL! I WANT THIS PLAY FARMED OUT--I DON'T WANT TO BE CONNECTED WITH IT! I HAVE MY REASONS, KENDALL!
HA! 'E YOU GONE MAD? DO YOU WANT A MASTERPIECE BURIED IN ANONYMITY? DO YOU WANT A GROUP OF HAMS DOING IT?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, KENDALL! THIS PLAY IS ME--PART OF MY LIFE, WHICH IS GONE AND BURIED! IT WAS WRITTEN FOR SOMEBODY WHOSE MEMORY IS ALL I CHERISH IN MY HEART! PLEASE DO AS I ASK!
THE PLAY WAS FARMED OUT TO A TALENTED BUT UNKNOWN PRODUCER, AND CASTING BEGAN AT ONCE!
I'VE GOT IDEAS ABOUT THIS MASTERPIECE FROM THE PEN OF AN UNKNOWN! THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN ON BROADWAY WHO CAN DO IT! I'VE STUDIED HIM, ADMIRED HIM, AND WATCHED HIM CRUMBLE TO DEFEAT!
IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT SUTTON, YOU'RE COMMITTING THEATRICAL SUICIDE! SUTTON'S A HAS-BEEN!
LISTEN, KRISMAN! WITHOUT A HUMAN ELEMENT TO SUPPORT IT, WITHOUT KINDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING, DRAMA IS A HOLLOW MOCKERY OF LIFE! I DON'T KNOW WHO PENNED THIS GEM BUT I DO KNOW ONLY BLAIN SUTTON CAN HANDLE IT, BECAUSE THIS IS BLAIN-- THIS IS THE SUTTON STORY!
GO AHEAD, FRENCH! BROADWAY IS LEERY OF FUNERALS AND THIS IS YOURS!
8


MICHAEL FRENCH SENT FOR BLAIN SUTTON AND ...
ALL THE GREAT WORDS, SPEECHES AND HEART-WARMING PHRASES EVER WRITTEN ARE CHOKED UP IN ME, MR. FRENCH! THIS IS MY PLAY! I'M GRATEFUL TO YOU!
LOOK, SUTTON! WHETHER IT FLOPS OR HITS, I'LL NEVER BE SORRY, BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND! THE PLAY WAS FARMED OUT TO ME BY A BIG AGENT AND I'M GIVING IT TO YOU BECAUSE I KNOW IT WAS MEANT FOR YOU!


ON OPENING NIGHT I DROPPED IN TO SEE KENDALL!
ALL SET FOR THE BIG NIGHT? MIND IF I TAG ALONG ?
FOR THE SLAUGHTER? NOT AT ALL! THIS IS FANTASTIC--INSANE! NO ADVANCE BALLYHOO, NO PRESS RELEASES, NO NAMES, NO NOTHING! FRENCH WOULDN'T EVEN DIVULGE THE NAME OF THE STAR!


I COULDN'T GO INTO THE THEATER! I REMAINED OUTSIDE WITH MY HEART CLUTCHED BY EMOTION! HAD I DONE THE RIGHT THING? WHO'D TAKE THE PART I'D WRITTEN FOR BLAIN ?
MICHAEL FRENC
PRESENTS
"WITH MY LAST BREATH
THE GREATEST DRAMATIC SURPRI OF THE CONTEMPORARY THEATRE


I WAITED OUTSIDE THE STAGE DOOR DURING THE PLAY, TORMENTED BY SHADOWS OF THE PAST, MY EYES BLURRED WITH TEARS!
OH, BLAIN, FORGIVE ME--WHEREVER YOU ARE! I LOVE YOU, BLAIN! THIS WAS FOR US...THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN...THE WAY IT STILL COULD BE IF WE WEREN'T A COUPLE OF FOOLISH KIDS!


IN THE NEXT SECOND, KENDALL WAS SHOVING ME INTO THE THEATER AND ONTO THE STAGE! I WAS FAINTLY AWARE OF THE ROARING AUDIENCE ...AND OF BLAIN SUTTON WAITING FOR ME WITH OPEN ARMS!
GET ON THERE AND BOW! THAT MADMAN, FRENCH, HAS HIT THE JACKPOT WITH A BAG FULL OF SURPRISES! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME, IRENE ?
OHHH, BLAIN! BLAIN, MY DARLING!

BLAIN, DON'T LET ME GO!
NEVER--NEVER! THIS IS THE PERFECT ENDING, DARLING!
BRAVO! BRAVO, SUTTON! BRAVO, DORSET!
The End

How I First Knew I Was In LOVE!

I'M ENGAGED, AND THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD, I GUESS... BUT I'VE HAD MY UNCERTAINTIES AND DOUBTS...

THIS LETTER WAS RECEIVED FROM S____ T____, FAIRFIELD, IOWA

4280

GEORGE AND I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN EACH OTHER, AND WHEN WE WERE IN OUR EARLY TEENS WE STARTED DATING...

JANIE, THERE'S A DANCE AT THE SOCIAL CLUB FRIDAY NIGHT... I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D SKIP THE BOYS' CLUB MEETING THIS WEEK-- IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO!

OH, GEORGE, THAT'D BE FUN!

GEORGE AND I WERE A COUPLE, FROM THEN ON, ENTIRELY TAKEN FOR GRANTED! NO OTHER BOY WOULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT OF ASKING ME OUT-- FOR I WAS **GEORGE'S GIRL!**

THE FIRST TIME GEORGE KISSED ME WAS THE MOST EXCITING MOMENT OF MY LIFE! BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT THAT FEELING WAS BEING IN LOVE!

SOMEHOW I NEVER COULD TELL HIM I LOVED HIM--BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE! ONE WEEK-END GEORGE TOOK A TRAIN TO DES MOINES AND I JUST SAT AROUND MISSING HIM! THEN SUDDENLY THE NEWS BROADCASTER SAID...

THE 8:12 EASTBOUND TRAIN CRASHED JUST OUTSIDE DES MOINES THIS EVENING, INJURING SEVERAL PASSENGERS! THE REPORT IS...

THE 8:12 EASTBOUND! **THAT'S THE TRAIN GEORGE IS ON!**

IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO GEORGE... IF ANYTHING EVER **SHOULD**... I'D... I'D JUST DIE!

ACTUALLY HE WASN'T IN ANY DANGER AT ALL--JUST GOT A LITTLE SHAKEN UP... AND HE CAME BACK THE NEXT DAY!

OH, GEORGE! YOU'RE SAFE! OH, DARLING! I LOVE YOU SO!

YES, HONEY, I'M ALL RIGHT-- I'M **FINE!**

AND EVER SINCE THAT MOMENT, I'VE KNOWN I'M IN LOVE! "

ARE YOU IN LOVE? WHEN DID YOU BECOME CERTAIN OF YOUR LOVE? LET US KNOW! SEND LETTER TO:
MY OWN ROMANCE
SUITE 1404
350-9TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 1, NEW YORK

MY UNTAMED DESIRE!

I THOUGHT I WAS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANY MAN, UNTIL I MET RAW, TOUGH, DEVIL-MAY-CARE JOE! AND THEN, AS OUR EMOTIONS FLARED UP VIOLENTLY IN THE HEART OF THE LONELY JUNGLES, I KNEW THAT NO MERE WOMAN COULD KEEP LOVE FROM HER HEART—FOREVER!

A TRUE LIFE STORY

5895

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE MY JOB? I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAVE HEARD OF ME! I DON'T USUALLY MAKE THE HEADLINES, BUT MY VOCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS IN THE WORLD! SOME TIME AGO...

AH! RUTH PHILLIPS! GOOD TO SEE YOU, YOUNG LADY!

HELLO, MR. GRAHAM! WHAT'S THE ASSIGNMENT THIS TIME?

EASY—FOR YOU! NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYBODY ELSE! THE MARTIN CIRCUS WANTS A BATCH OF LIONS, JAGUARS AND ELEPHANTS! CAN YOU GET THEM?

THAT'S MY JOB! I'LL LEAVE FOR AFRICA AT ONCE!

YES, THAT'S IT! I'M AN IMPORTER OF WILD ANIMALS! ALL MY LIFE I'D BEEN AROUND THEM! AND I LEARNED HOW TO HANDLE SAVAGE BEASTS FROM A VERY GOOD TEACHER...MY UNCLE FRANK!

YOU'VE GOT TO BE FIRM WITH THEM, RUTHIE! SHOW 'EM YOU'RE THE BOSS... ELSE THEY'LL HANDLE *YOU*... NOT YOU THEM!

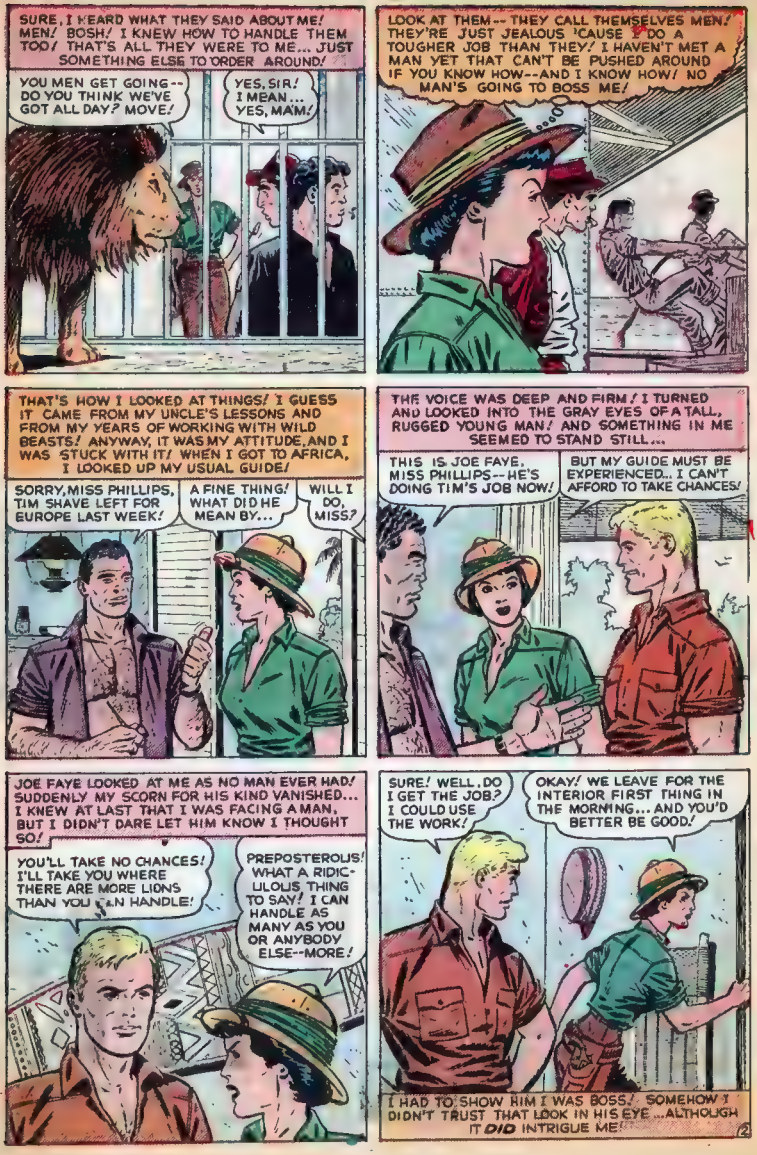
I'LL REMEMBER THAT, UNCLE FRANK!

AND I DID REMEMBER, TOO! TRUE, I MAY HAVE LOST SOME OF MY FEMININE APPEAL IN THE PROCESS, BUT I WAS A GOOD ANIMAL HANDLER!

ALL RIGHT! GET IN THERE! COME ON... GET!

WHEW! WHAT A WOMAN!

YEAH... FOR ANIMALS! NOT FOR MEN!


SURE, I HEARD WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT ME! MEN! BOSH! I KNEW HOW TO HANDLE THEM TOO! THAT'S ALL THEY WERE TO ME... JUST SOMETHING ELSE TO ORDER AROUND!
YOU MEN GET GOING -- DO YOU THINK WE'VE GOT ALL DAY? MOVE!
YES, SIR! I MEAN... YES, MAM!
LOOK AT THEM -- THEY CALL THEMSELVES MEN! THEY'RE JUST JEALOUS 'CAUSE I DO A TOUGHER JOB THAN THEY! I HAVEN'T MET A MAN YET THAT CAN'T BE PUSHED AROUND IF YOU KNOW HOW--AND I KNOW HOW! NO MAN'S GOING TO BOSS ME!
THAT'S HOW I LOOKED AT THINGS! I GUESS IT CAME FROM MY UNCLE'S LESSONS AND FROM MY YEARS OF WORKING WITH WILD BEASTS! ANYWAY, IT WAS MY ATTITUDE, AND I WAS STUCK WITH IT! WHEN I GOT TO AFRICA, I LOOKED UP MY USUAL GUIDE!
SORRY, MISS PHILLIPS, TIM SHAVE LEFT FOR EUROPE LAST WEEK!
A FINE THING! WHAT DID HE MEAN BY...
WILL I DO, MISS?
THE VOICE WAS DEEP AND FIRM! I TURNED AND LOOKED INTO THE GRAY EYES OF A TALL, RUGGED YOUNG MAN! AND SOMETHING IN ME SEEMED TO STAND STILL...
THIS IS JOE FAYE, MISS PHILLIPS -- HE'S DOING TIM'S JOB NOW!
BUT MY GUIDE MUST BE EXPERIENCED... I CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE CHANCES!
JOE FAYE LOOKED AT ME AS NO MAN EVER HAD! SUDDENLY MY SCORN FOR HIS KIND VANISHED... I KNEW AT LAST THAT I WAS FACING A MAN, BUT I DIDN'T DARE LET HIM KNOW I THOUGHT SO!
YOU'LL TAKE NO CHANCES! I'LL TAKE YOU WHERE THERE ARE MORE LIONS THAN YOU CAN HANDLE!
PREPOSTEROUS! WHAT A RIDICULOUS THING TO SAY! I CAN HANDLE AS MANY AS YOU OR ANYBODY ELSE--MORE!
SURE! WELL, DO I GET THE JOB? I COULD USE THE WORK!
OKAY! WE LEAVE FOR THE INTERIOR FIRST THING IN THE MORNING... AND YOU'D BETTER BE GOOD!
I HAD TO SHOW HIM I WAS BOSS! SOMEHOW I DIDN'T TRUST THAT LOOK IN HIS EYE ...ALTHOUGH IT DID INTRIGUE ME!
2

JOE FAYE WAS ALL HE SAID! HE WAS A COMPETENT AND DARING GUIDE WHO KNEW HIS BUSINESS...HE TOOK CHARGE OF THE SAFARI WITH A FIRM HAND!

THIS IS IT! WE CAMP HERE! SET UP THE TENTS!

YES, BWANA JOE!

ALL OF US PITCHED IN TO DO THE WORK, AND THEN... THERE WAS A SLIGHT ACCIDENT! I TRIPPED AND FELL INTO JOE'S ARMS!

OH!

CAREFUL, MISS PHILLIPS!

FOR ONE THRILLING, TINGLING MOMENT HE HELD ME TIGHT IN HIS ARMS, MY LIPS SO CLOSE TO HIS! I CLOSED MY EYES, WAITING FOR...I KNEW NOT WHAT!

BUT HIS WORDS JARRED ME! GENTLY BUT FIRMLY HE RIGHTED ME AND SAID...

YOU'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL, MISS PHILLIPS...CAMPING OUT LIKE THIS CAN BE PRETTY ROUGH ON A GIRL!

WHAT? WELL OF ALL THE UNMITIGATED GALL!

MY FIRST INCLINATION WAS TO STRIKE BACK AT HIM FOR WHAT HE SAID! I WAS ABLE TO TAKE THE JUNGLE AS WELL AS ANY MAN! BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT HURT MORE... MUCH MORE! HE FELT I WAS HELPLESS!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MISS? DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?

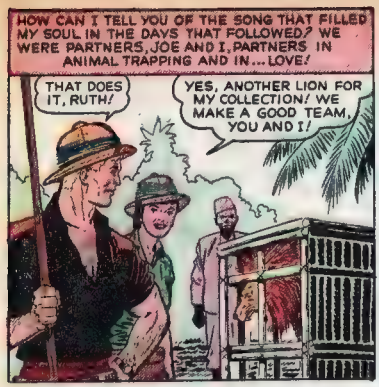
NO! NEVER MIND... IT'S NOTHING!

JUST A MINUTE... I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TELL YOU THAT MAY BE WRONG! I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU, RUTH! DO YOU HEAR?

YES, I HEAR YOU AND YOU ARE CRAZY! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE TO...

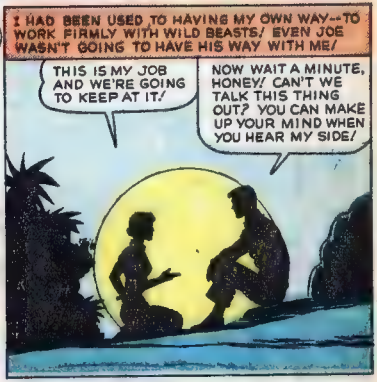
HIS WORDS SURPRISED ME... DELIGHTED ME! BUT I COULDN'T LET HIM KNOW--I COULDN'T LET HIM THINK THAT I FELT THAT WAY ABOUT HIM!

BUT A MAN HAS A WAY WITH A MAID... AND JOE, WITHOUT A WORD, GRASPED MY ARM AS I STARTED TO LEAVE...
COME HERE, SHORTY!
HOW DARE YO... GLLIB!
MMMM!
SO THIS WAS LOVE! HOW COULD I FIGHT? HIS LIPS WERE SWEET AND WARM AND I WAS IN HEAVEN HERE, DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE AFRICAN JUNGLE!
RUTH, YOU CARE TOO, DON'T YOU? TELL ME YOU DO!
OH, YES, MY DARLING! MORE THAN I EVER THOUGHT I COULD CARE FOR ANYONE! KISS ME AGAIN, JOE, AGAIN AND AGAIN!
FORGOTTEN THEN WERE THE PERILS OF THE JUNGLE, THE DARK AND THE WILDERNESS! I HAD NEVER KNOWN THAT LIFE HELD SUCH BLISS SUCH ECSTASY! I HAD FOUND THE MAN I LOVED AND MY CUP OF HAPPINESS WAS OVERFLOWING!
4


HOW CAN I TELL YOU OF THE SONG THAT FILLED MY SOUL IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED? WE WERE PARTNERS, JOE AND I, PARTNERS IN ANIMAL TRAPPING AND IN... LOVE!
THAT DOES IT, RUTH!
YES, ANOTHER LION FOR MY COLLECTION! WE MAKE A GOOD TEAM, YOU AND I!

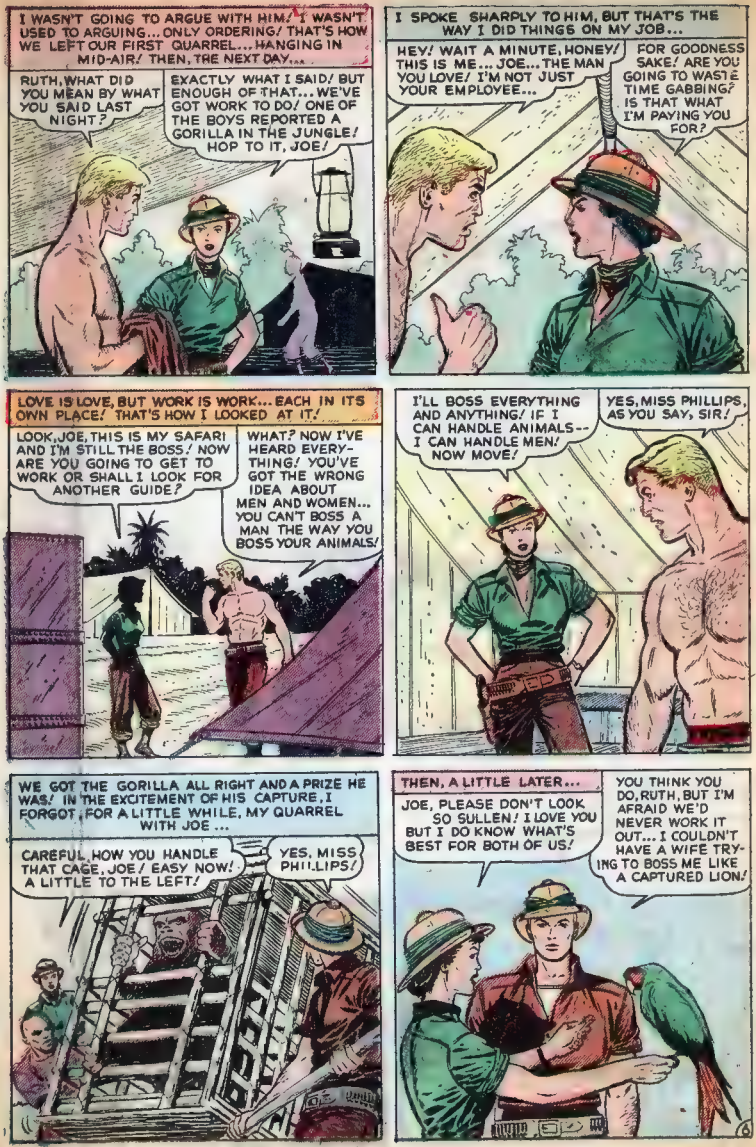
WHEN WILL WE BE MARRIED, DARLING? I DON'T BELIEVE IN LONG ENGAGEMENTS!
NOR I! AS SOON AS WE GET BACK TO AMERICA... WE'LL BE MR. AND MRS. FAYE, FOREVER!

THEN, RUTH, WE CAN SETTLE DOWN IN VERMONT! MY FOLKS HAVE A BIG FARM THERE AND THEY'VE BEEN ANXIOUS TO HAVE ME GO BACK AND TAKE CHARGE! YOU'LL LOVE IT, RUTH!
A FARM? FOR ME? OH, DARLING! YOU HAVE SUCH A STRANGE SENSE OF HUMOR!


I HAD BEEN USED TO HAVING MY OWN WAY--TO WORK FIRMLY WITH WILD BEASTS! EVEN JOE WASN'T GOING TO HAVE HIS WAY WITH ME!
THIS IS MY JOB AND WE'RE GOING TO KEEP AT IT!
NOW WAIT A MINUTE, HONEY! CAN'T WE TALK THIS THING OUT? YOU CAN MAKE UP YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR MY SIDE!

I HAD BEEN BOSSING GUIDES AND HELPERS AROUND TOO LONG TO HAVE JOE TALK TO ME THAT WAY!
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! THIS IS MY LIFE, JOE! LET'S GET THAT STRAIGHT!
NO! LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT...

IF WE MARRY, RUTH, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE THE BOSS OF THE FAMILY! NO ONE IS... IT'S GOT TO BE FIFTY-FIFTY! WE'VE GOT TO TALK THINGS LIKE THIS OUT!
"IF WE MARRY" IS RIGHT!


I WASN'T GOING TO ARGUE WITH HIM. I WASN'T USED TO ARGUING... ONLY ORDERING. THAT'S HOW WE LEFT OUR FIRST QUARREL... HANGING IN MID-AIR. THEN, THE NEXT DAY...
RUTH, WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY WHAT YOU SAID LAST NIGHT?
EXACTLY WHAT I SAID. BUT ENOUGH OF THAT... WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO. ONE OF THE BOYS REPORTED A GORILLA IN THE JUNGLE. HOP TO IT, JOE.
I SPOKE SHARPLY TO HIM, BUT THAT'S THE WAY I DID THINGS ON MY JOB...
HEY. WAIT A MINUTE, HONEY. THIS IS ME... JOE... THE MAN YOU LOVE. I'M NOT JUST YOUR EMPLOYEE...
FOR GOODNESS SAKE. ARE YOU GOING TO WASTE TIME GABBING? IS THAT WHAT I'M PAYING YOU FOR?
LOVE IS LOVE, BUT WORK IS WORK... EACH IN ITS OWN PLACE. THAT'S HOW I LOOKED AT IT.
LOOK, JOE, THIS IS MY SAFARI AND I'M STILL THE BOSS. NOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET TO WORK OR SHALL I LOOK FOR ANOTHER GUIDE?
WHAT? NOW I'VE HEARD EVERYTHING. YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT MEN AND WOMEN... YOU CAN'T BOSS A MAN THE WAY YOU BOSS YOUR ANIMALS.
I'LL BOSS EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING. IF I CAN HANDLE ANIMALS-- I CAN HANDLE MEN. NOW MOVE.
YES, MISS PHILLIPS, AS YOU SAY, SIR.
WE GOT THE GORILLA ALL RIGHT AND A PRIZE HE WAS. IN THE EXCITEMENT OF HIS CAPTURE, I FORGOT, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, MY QUARREL WITH JOE...
CAREFUL, HOW YOU HANDLE THAT CAGE, JOE. EASY NOW. A LITTLE TO THE LEFT.
YES, MISS PHILLIPS.
THEN, A LITTLE LATER...
JOE, PLEASE DON'T LOOK SO SULLEN. I LOVE YOU BUT I DO KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR BOTH OF US.
YOU THINK YOU DO, RUTH, BUT I'M AFRAID WE'D NEVER WORK IT OUT... I COULDN'T HAVE A WIFE TRYING TO BOSS ME LIKE A CAPTURED LION.
6

TO YOU MARRIAGE WOULD BE JUST ANOTHER JUNGLE EXPEDITION OF WHICH YOU WERE IN COMPLETE CHARGE! NO, RUTH, UNTIL YOU COME TO ME AND TELL ME THAT YOU'RE WILLING TO ASSUME YOUR PROPER PLACE IN LIFE'S PARTNERSHIP, WHERE MAN AND WIFE ARE EQUAL... UNTIL THEN... WE MIGHT AS WELL FORGET ABOUT IT!

I SAW MY LOVE WALK AWAY AND LEAVE ME! I WAS CONFUSED AND ANGERED BY ALL THIS! TO ME IT WAS ALL TOO SIMPLE -- I JUST COULDN'T UNDERSTAND JOE'S ATTITUDE! BUT IF THAT WAS THE WAY HE WANTED IT...

I'LL CRAWL TO NOBODY! IF YOU EXPECT ME TO BEG FOR YOUR LOVE...

FORGET IT, RUTH! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU COULDN'T!

TO SAY MY HEART WAS BROKEN WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT! IT WAS SMASHED... POUNDED TO A PULP! BUT I HAD NEVER LEARNED TO BE SUBSERVIENT TO ANYONE, SO I DECIDED TO TRY TO FORGET WHAT JOE MEANT TO ME-- IF I COULD! HE, I THINK, HAD ALREADY FORGOTTEN ME!

WE'RE ALL PACKED AND READY TO GO, MISS PHILLIPS!

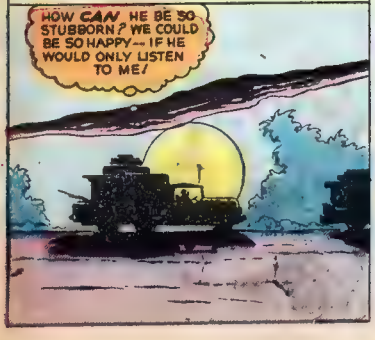
GOOD, JOE! IS THE GORILLA SECURELY LOCKED UP?

AS YOU ORDERED! CONGRATULATIONS... YOUR SAFARI WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL!

YES, IN SOME RESPECTS I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT!

SO WE STARTED BACK ON A LONG TREK TO THE PORT! ANY CONTACT WITH JOE WAS STRICTLY OF A BUSINESS NATURE... AND IT HURT...

HOW *CAN* HE BE SO STUBBORN? WE COULD BE SO HAPPY -- IF HE WOULD ONLY LISTEN TO ME!



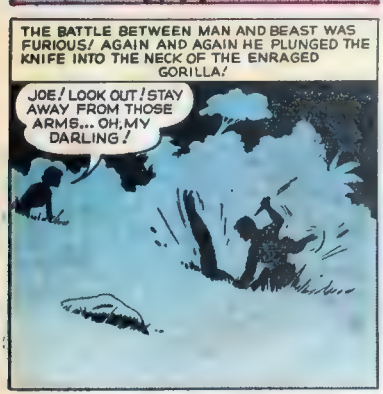
THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, THE DREAD CRY RANG OUT IN THE JUNGLE...

GORILLA! HE ESCAPE! BREAK OUT OF CAGE!!

THERE HE WAS, WILD WITH RAGE, BENT ON VENGEANCE AGAINST HIS CAPTORS! I QUICKLY TOOK COMMAND OF THE SITUATION...
STAND BACK--I'LL HANDLE THIS! I'LL MAKE HIM GET BACK IN HIS CAGE!
ARE YOU MAD? YOU CAN'T HANDLE THAT CRAZED BRUTE! HE'LL KILL YOU!
I'LL SHOW YOU I CAN HANDLE THINGS BETTER THAN ANY MAN! MAYBE I CAN'T BOSS YOU, BUT WATCH ME BOSS THIS BEAST!
IT WAS MY CONFUSED HURT OVER JOE THAT MADE ME ACT SO FOOLISHLY! I WAS DETERMINED TO PROVE MY RIGHT TO MY SUPERIORITY, SO... I FACED THE CHARGING GORILLA WITH ONLY A WHIP!
BACK! BACK, YOU BEAST! BACK, I SAY! BACK IN YOUR CAGE!
R-R-RAGH!
RUTH! IT'S SUICIDE! GET AWAY! THAT'S A WILD ANIMAL--NOT A HUMAN!
SO WHAT? HE CAN'T DEFY ME! NO MALE CAN! BACK! BACK!
CLOSER CAME THE GORILLA AND MY WHIP LASHED OUT AT HIM...
THEN HE LIFTED UP HIS ARM, AND SWUNG!
YOU CAN'T... OH!
RUTH! LOOK OUT!

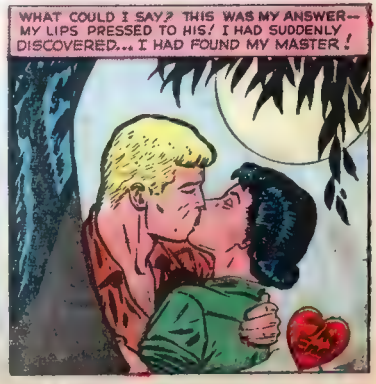
THE BEAST'S BLOW HURLED ME TO THE SIDE... AND THEN, EYES GLEAMING WITH HATE, HE CAME TOWARD ME!
GET BACK! DON'T COME CLOSER! OH... JOE--
HELP!

JUST AS HE GOT CLOSE TO ME, SOMEONE FLUNG HIMSELF ON THE GORILLA'S BACK! IT WAS JOE ARMED ONLY WITH A KNIFE--AND RAW COURAGE!


THE BATTLE BETWEEN MAN AND BEAST WAS FURIOUS! AGAIN AND AGAIN HE PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO THE NECK OF THE ENRAGED GORILLA!
JOE! LOOK OUT! STAY AWAY FROM THOSE ARMS... OH, MY DARLING!

AT LAST THE KNIFE DID ITS WORK! THE BEAST WAS DEAD! TORN, HURT, JOE CAME OVER TO ME AND PICKED ME UP...
BIG BOSS, EH? CAN HANDLE ANYTHING, EH? BETTER THAN ANY MAN, EH?
JOE... I...

SHUT UP, WOMAN! YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH BOSSING... IT'S TIME SOMEBODY BOSSED YOU FOR A CHANGE! RUTHIE, YOU'RE GOING TO DO AS I SAY FROM NOW ON, OR I THROW YOU BACK TO THE GORILLAS! NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?
ALL I CAN SAY IS...
9


WHAT COULD I SAY? THIS WAS MY ANSWER--MY LIPS PRESSED TO HIS! I HAD SUDDENLY DISCOVERED... I HAD FOUND MY MASTER!

LOVE IS NO DREAM

I DON'T know when I first realized that I was in love with Jeff Adams, because it seems as if I'd known and loved Jeff all of my life. He pulled my pigtails, threw snowballs at me, and teased me about my first party dress. And still I thought Jeff was the most wonderful man alive. Now that we had become engaged to be married, it seemed as if all my prayers had been answered.

All my prayers had been answered, until Judy Houston returned from Europe and decided to stay for the summer. We never saw much of Judy because she was either abroad or away at school. When she was in town, we'd only catch glimpses of her in her convertible, dashing around town and paying little attention to the rest of us. Personally I had nothing against Judy; she was spoiled, but then who wouldn't be with a father who owned a steel mill? I guess too much money leaves a definite distortion on anyone's values.

It was on a Sunday morning that I discovered that Jeff and Judy had bumped into each other on the street and were now on the road to a binding friendship. I had stopped by to give Peggy Adams, Jeff's sister, a pattern I had promised her. Peggy and I had grown up together and had been the best of friends throughout our school days.

"Where's Jeff?" I asked. "I thought he was going to sleep late this morning."

"He's up and out," Peggy said hesitantly. "Didn't you know he was playing tennis this morning with Judy Houston?"

"No, he didn't mention it," I said with a forced smile. "I guess it slipped his mind!"

"Slipped his mind?" she repeated. "I thought you two were engaged!"

"Don't worry so much, Peg," I assured her. "Jeff will tell me. You know I can't play a good game of tennis, and if Judy can, well—that's fine. I'm not worried."

I tried to laugh the whole situation off, but Peg was not convinced and, frankly, neither was I. After all, Judy had beauty, brains, and breeding, and I knew Jeff had an eye for all three.

Peg had never approved of my going with Jeff, and even though she was his younger sister, she made no bones about her opinions. She had often told me that any girl was a fool to fall in love with Jeff, and she hated to see me fall into that class. I could never take Peg's warning too seriously; I was so wrapped up in Jeff that nobody else existed for me.

It was late that evening when Jeff finally telephoned to say that he was too tired to go out that evening as we had planned. He told me that he had played tennis all afternoon with Judy at the Houston tennis courts. There was not a note of apology in his voice and I, like a fool, told him it was all right to break the date. It had always been like that. Jeff was infallible. He never bothered to apologize for broken dates, or being hours late, or flirting with other women.

I knew no other woman would stand for the way Jeff treated me, but I still loved him. He was my first love and my last, I thought. Twisting Jeff's engagement ring around my finger gave me the assurance that he was mine. After we were married, I knew he'd change—perhaps he'd grow to love me as much as I loved him.

Jeff played tennis frequently with Judy, but he always told me about it, and I was determined not to be jealous.

"The Houstons have invited me to dinner tomorrow," he told me one evening after we had come home from a late movie.

"Are you going?" I asked.

"I couldn't miss this," he answered, as if I had asked a stupid question. "Think what it means for a young lawyer to have a contact like Hoover Houston."

"It's wonderful, Jeff," I said. "But, well, tomorrow is Dad's birthday party, and we've planned on your being there."

"Look, darling," he said as he took me in his arms, "we are playing for big stakes now. Judy Houston has taken a fancy to me, and I'm not going to discourage it. I don't want to stick in a crummy law office all my life. There's politics you know, and Hoover Houston is the man to know!"

Jeff was right, I told myself. Hoover Houston was a powerful man to have pulling on your side, but I couldn't understand why I couldn't be included in the game of intrigue. I was his fiancee, and my father held a responsible position in the community as a judge and head of the school board. Why couldn't he bring me to dinner too? When I asked him about this, he became irritated and snapped at me.

"Don't you see?" he asked. "Judy is interested in my future. I've got to play up to her as well as to her father. And, anyway, she doesn't know that we are engaged."

"But, Jeff, everyone in town knows!" I said in surprise.

"What does Judy know of the town's gossip" Jeff said. "What does a town like Cum-

mingville mean to Judy Houston. She's been around."

I felt miserable after Jeff had left. Why didn't I tell him that I didn't want life to go on this way? Why was I so weak with Jeff? The answer was simple. I was in love, so much in love that I'd let Jeff twist me and turn me as long as we were together. It was as Peg had said: any girl was a fool to fall for Jeff!

The summer slipped by and I saw less and less of Jeff, and I was crawling slowly into a shell of bitterness. But when Jeff would call, my bitterness faded, and I'd consent to meet him. He seemed attentive enough when we were together, but I felt that his mind was elsewhere—maybe on Judy.

One Saturday evening I received a telephone call from Jeff breaking a date, and although I had said it was all right, I regretted it as soon as I placed the receiver on the hook. I was feeling desperate. If Jeff would just include me once on these visits to the Houstons, it would have eased the blow of his breaking dates and edging slowly out of my life, but he hadn't. I had been kept in the background as if he were ashamed of me. The time had come for a showdown.

It was a short walk over to the Adams house, and I debated several times whether to turn back and wait for Jeff to take the first step, but something called "self-respect" urged me on. I was surprised I had enough "self-respect" left, since Jeff had crushed so much of it out of me.

When I reached the front steps, I heard his voice. He sounded angry. I heard Peg's voice too, and for a moment I paused to listen to what they were saying. When I heard my name mentioned, I froze to the spot.

"What can she do for me?" I heard Jeff ask. "I'd be a fool to pass up Judy Houston for *her!*"

"Well, then, tell her, Jeff! Don't let her go on dreaming that someday you will marry her!" Peg said.

"I'll do it my own way, like I've always done," Jeff said with scorn. "If it makes that kid feel happy at the thought of my marrying her, why break the illusion for a while? And besides, I have to be careful. Her father is a respected man in the community, you know. If I toss over his daughter lightly for Judy Houston, there will be gossip."

"You'll never change, Jeff," Peg said in disgust. "Ever since we were kids, you've stepped on people to get what you want."

"That's the only way to get on," he said with a sneer. "I'm going to ask Judy to marry me tonight."

It was an effort to move my legs, but I managed to walk calmly off the Adams porch toward home. I wanted to cry, but no tears came. Jeff had been using me for his campaign to rise to the top—I had been a stepping stone! That had been the love story of Jeff and me. There was nothing to my dreams now, except bitter memories, and when I thought of the past, I felt sick. All of the love I felt for Jeff turned to a deep hate, and I longed to do something to hurt him the way he was hurting me!

No human being has a right to tear the heart out of another for his own selfish ends, I kept saying to myself. And finally when the tears did come, that was the only thought I held firmly in my mind. Any girl was a fool to fall for Jeff Adams because she'd be blind to his selfishness and hungry ambition, just as I had been blinded by a childhood dream of having Jeff for my own.

Later that night I pulled myself together and came down to join my family for dinner. I picked at my food disinterestedly and was about to excuse myself from the table when Dad said, "Hoover Houston called me today."

There was a short silence and I sat down again in my chair.

"He did?" I asked.

"Yes, it seems that he wants his daughter out of the country tonight, and wanted me to rush passport papers through my friends in Washington," he said, keeping his eyes on his plate.

"Passport papers?" I said.

"Yes," Dad said. "It seems that Hoover didn't like her tennis companion for the summer, and wants Judy in England as soon as possible."

"Has she gone?" I asked.

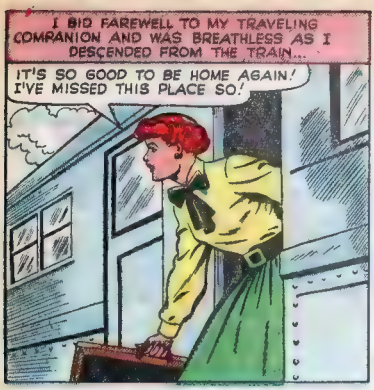
"Yes," he said. "She left town this morning."

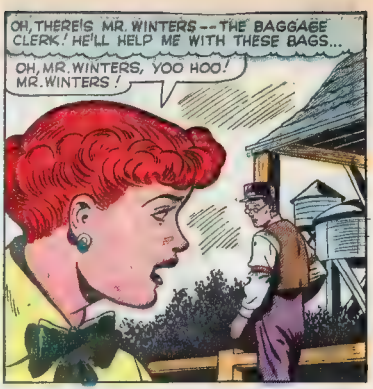
I looked at Dad for a moment and saw him smile. I knew that he understood and had known all along what Jeff really was. I guess everyone did except me, and I had to learn the hard way. My childhood dream was shattered, but now I'm no longer a child!

THE END

6306

I WAS NOT WANTED IN TOWN!
A TRUE LIFE STORY
6092
IT WAS AN AWFUL THING--PEOPLE CAN BE SO CRUEL AT TIMES! IF ONLY I HAD BEEN THERE FROM THE BEGINNING...
...PERHAPS I COULD'VE DONE SOMETHING TO SAVE OUR NAME! I FIRST REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING WHEN I RETURNED FROM COLLEGE AFTER THE FIRST SEMESTER!
EVERYTHING SEEMED SO LOVELY THEN... IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO REALIZE THAT I WAS BUT MOMENTS AWAY FROM UNHAPPINESS!
WELL, YOUNG LADY, I SUPPOSE YOU'LL ENJOY YOUR FIRST VISIT HOME FROM COLLEGE!
OH YES! DAD ISN'T EXPECTING ME! I THOUGHT I'D SURPRISE HIM!
I'M SURE HE'LL BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU! YOU'RE SUCH A FINE YOUNG WOMAN!
THANK YOU, M'A M! I HAVEN'T BEEN HOME IN MONTHS!
NEXT STOP-- CROTON!
1


I BID FAREWELL TO MY TRAVELING COMPANION AND WAS BREATHLESS AS I DESCENDED FROM THE TRAIN...
IT'S SO GOOD TO BE HOME AGAIN! I'VE MISSED THIS PLACE SO!


OH, THERE'S MR. WINTERS -- THE BAGGAGE CLERK! HE'LL HELP ME WITH THESE BAGS...
OH, MR. WINTERS, YOO HOO! MR. WINTERS!

AND THAT WAS THE FIRST INTRODUCTION I HAD TO THE POWERFUL HATRED THAT I WAS ABOUT TO FACE... IT TOOK ME QUITE BY SURPRISE!
THAT'S ODD! I'M SURE HE HEARD ME! WELL I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND A CAB MYSELF!

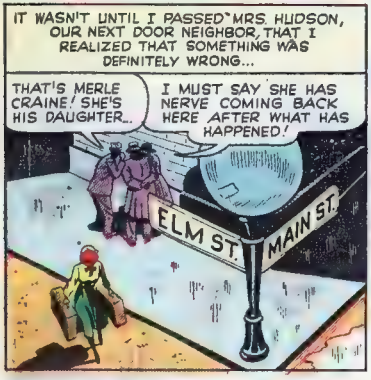
OH, ALEX -- ALEX DOWNS! REMEMBER ME? I'M MERLE CRAINE! DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DRIVE ME...
TAXI

GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT COULD BE WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE? THEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE ME! I'LL HAVE TO WALK HOME!
2

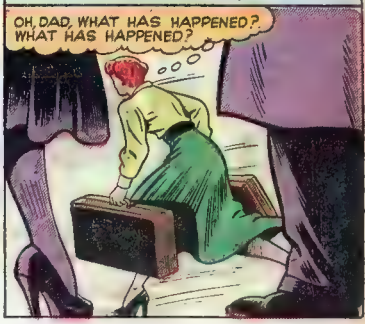
TO GET TO MY HOME IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ME TO WALK THROUGH THE BUSINESS DISTRICT OF CROTON...IT WAS CERTAINLY A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME...

WHAT AN ODD SENSATION! THESE PEOPLE WHO HAD KNOWN ME FROM CHILDHOOD--WERE STARING AT ME AND SHYING AWAY! I DIDN'T KNOW QUITE WHAT TO DO...

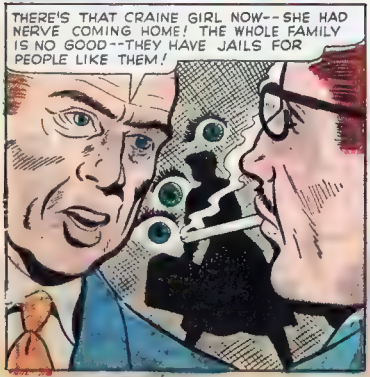
IT WASN'T UNTIL I PASSED MRS. HUDSON, OUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR, THAT I REALIZED THAT SOMETHING WAS DEFINITELY WRONG...



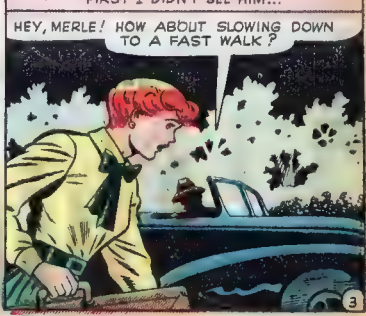
I HAD TO GET HOME! WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO CAUSE ALL THESE TOWNS-PEOPLE TO ACT LIKE THIS?



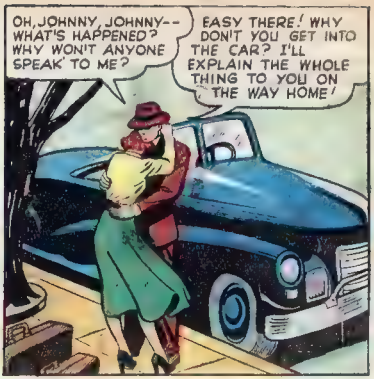
THERE'S THAT CRAINE GIRL NOW--SHE HAD NERVE COMING HOME! THE WHOLE FAMILY IS NO GOOD--THEY HAVE JAILS FOR PEOPLE LIKE THEM!

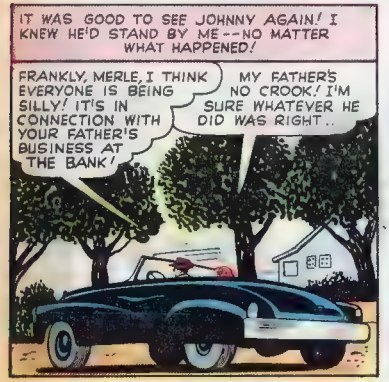


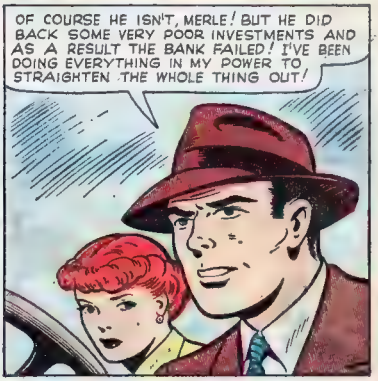
IT WASN'T UNTIL I WAS SEVERAL BLOCKS FROM HOME THAT JOHNNY ANDREWS, MY BOY FRIEND, DROVE UP IN HIS CAR! AT FIRST I DIDN'T SEE HIM...

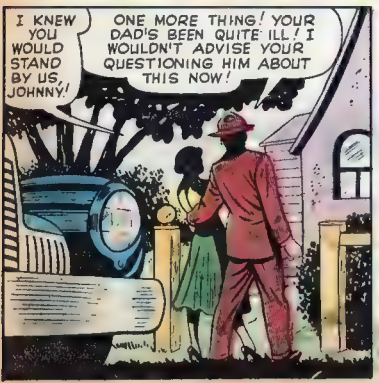


OH, JOHNNY, SOB-- AT LAST SOMEBODY SPOKE TO ME!
HEY, WHAT'S THIS?


OH, JOHNNY, JOHNNY-- WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHY WON'T ANYONE SPEAK TO ME?
EASY THERE! WHY DON'T YOU GET INTO THE CAR? I'LL EXPLAIN THE WHOLE THING TO YOU ON THE WAY HOME!


IT WAS GOOD TO SEE JOHNNY AGAIN! I KNEW HE'D STAND BY ME--NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED!
FRANKLY, MERLE, I THINK EVERYONE IS BEING SILLY! IT'S IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS AT THE BANK!
MY FATHER'S NO CROOK! I'M SURE WHATEVER HE DID WAS RIGHT..


OF COURSE HE ISN'T, MERLE! BUT HE DID BACK SOME VERY POOR INVESTMENTS AND AS A RESULT THE BANK FAILED! I'VE BEEN DOING EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO STRAIGHTEN THE WHOLE THING OUT!

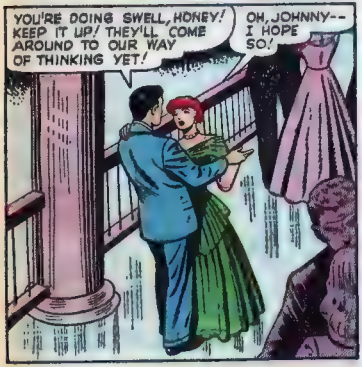

I KNEW YOU WOULD STAND BY US, JOHNNY!
ONE MORE THING! YOUR DAD'S BEEN QUITE ILL! I WOULDN'T ADVISE YOUR QUESTIONING HIM ABOUT THIS NOW!

IT ISN'T SERIOUS, IS IT JOHNNY? I MEAN...
NO, OF COURSE NOT! JUST HIS NERVES! HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT! THERE'S A DANCE ON TONIGHT--PICK YOU UP THEN!

TO FEEL JOHNNY'S STRONG ARMS AROUND ME ONCE AGAIN MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NEW WOMAN! I COULD FIGHT ANYTHING WITH HIM BESIDE ME!
OH, JOHNNY...
AFTER JOHNNY LEFT, I WENT IN TO SEE DAD! IT WAS NICE BEING HOME, BUT IT HURT TO SEE HIM SICK IN BED...
OH, DAD! DAD-- I'M HOME!
MERLE--YOU--YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME!
DON'T BE UPSET, DAD! JOHNNY EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO ME! I'M SURE THINGS WILL TURN OUT ALL RIGHT!
I... CERTAINLY HOPE SO, MERLE!
...I DIDN'T EXPECT THINGS TO HAPPEN THIS WAY! ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS HELP PEOPLE! AS A RESULT I'VE DISGRACED OUR NAME!
NOW, YOU GO TO SLEEP! JOHNNY IS ON OUR SIDE! HE'LL FIND AN ANSWER SOMEWHERE! YOU MUSN'T WORRY!
...IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME AGAIN, MERLE!
THAT EVENING JOHNNY CAME AROUND TO TAKE ME TO THE DANCE! I WAS RATHER NERVOUS -- IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FACE ALL THOSE PEOPLE...
GEE, HONEY, YOU LOOK SWELL! KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!
THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT, JOHNNY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT YOU!
5

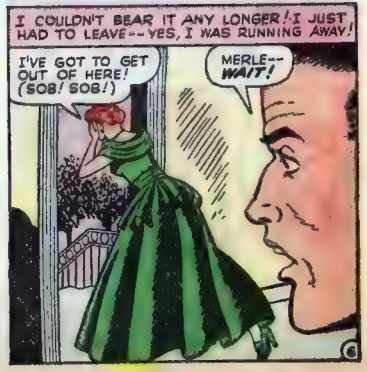
IT WAS JUST AS I HAD EXPECTED! I KNEW WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE DANCE THAT THE HATRED THE TOWN PEOPLE OF CROTON HAD FOR MY FAMILY WOULD NEVER BE SHAKEN...

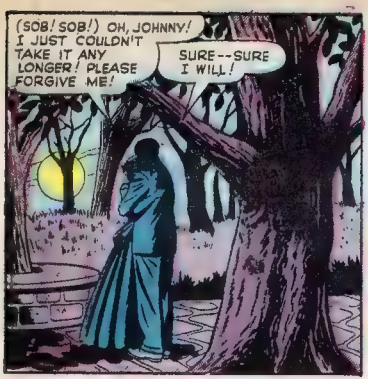
OH, WHY--WHY DOES EVERYONE STARE AT ME? CAN'T THEY LEAVE ME ALONE? I'VE GOT TO BE BRAVE!


YOU'RE DOING SWELL, HONEY! KEEP IT UP! THEY'LL COME AROUND TO OUR WAY OF THINKING YET!
OH, JOHNNY-- I HOPE SO!

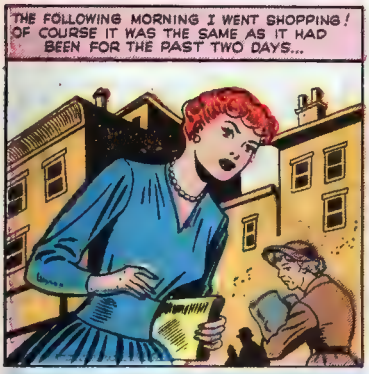
I'VE BEEN SCOUTING AROUND TODAY AND MIGHT HAVE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!
OH, I HOPE SO, JOHNNY! I CAN'T GO ON MUCH LONGER LIKE THIS!

WE HAD ONLY DANCED SEVERAL MINUTES WHEN I REALIZED THAT THE ENTIRE DANCE FLOOR WAS EMPTY! I--I TRIED TO CONTROL MYSELF BUT IT WAS NO USE...
JOHNNY--I--THEY'VE STOPPED DANCING!


I COULDN'T BEAR IT ANY LONGER! I JUST HAD TO LEAVE--YES, I WAS RUNNING AWAY!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! (SOB! SOB!)
MERLE-- WAIT!

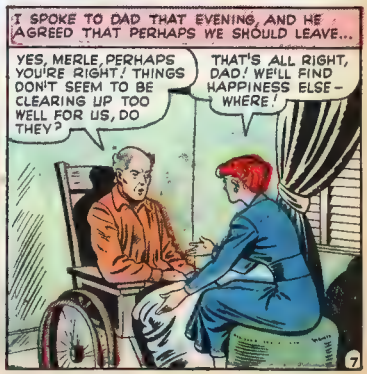

(SOB! SOB!) OH, JOHNNY! I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER! PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
SURE--SURE I WILL!

I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU HOME NOW, MERLE! THERE ARE SOME THINGS I WANT TO CHECK ON! WHY DON'T YOU DROP IN AT MY STORE TOMORROW?
ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE IN TO SEE YOU WHEN I GO SHOPPING!

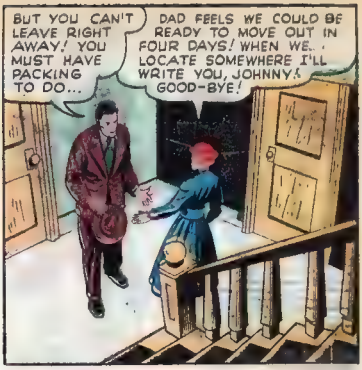

THE FOLLOWING MORNING I WENT SHOPPING! OF COURSE IT WAS THE SAME AS IT HAD BEEN FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS...

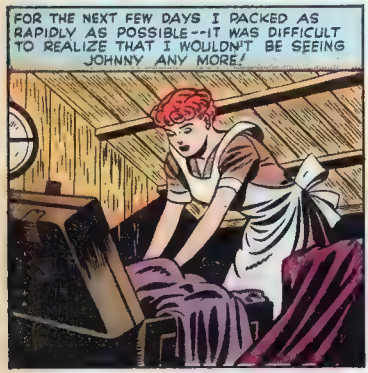
I DIDN'T LET IT BOTHER ME--THAT IS, UNTIL I WENT INTO MASON'S GROCERY STORE! THEN I REALIZED THAT IT WAS A HOPELESS CAUSE...
I TELL YOU, MAMIE, I'LL NOT BUY ANY MORE SHOES IN JOHNNY ANDREWS' SHOE STORE!
AND NEITHER WILL I! I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANYONE THAT ASSOCIATES WITH THAT CRAINE FAMILY!

I KNEW THEN THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO! DAD AND I MUST LEAVE TOWN!
I MUSTN'T SEE HIM! IT WOULD ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE! IF HE CONTINUES TO SEE ME, HIS BUSINESS WILL BE RUINED!
ANDREWS' SHOE SHOP

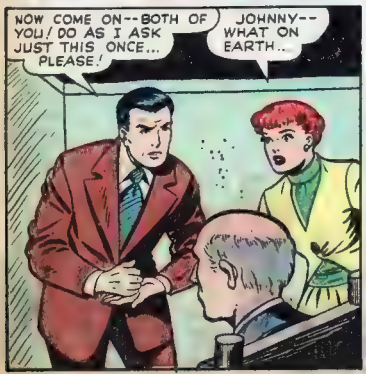

I SPOKE TO DAD THAT EVENING, AND HE AGREED THAT PERHAPS WE SHOULD LEAVE...
YES, MERLE, PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT! THINGS DON'T SEEM TO BE CLEARING UP TOO WELL FOR US, DO THEY?
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD! WE'LL FIND HAPPINESS ELSEWHERE!

WHEN I TOLD JOHNNY HE BECAME QUITE UPSET! I REALLY COULDN'T BLAME HIM...
BUT, MERLE, I'VE COME SO CLOSE TO STRAIGHTENING THINGS OUT! YOU MUSTN'T LEAVE NOW!
I'M SORRY, JOHNNY! DAD AND I HAVE TALKED THINGS OVER! IT'S FOR THE BEST!


BUT YOU CAN'T LEAVE RIGHT AWAY! YOU MUST HAVE PACKING TO DO...
DAD FEELS WE COULD BE READY TO MOVE OUT IN FOUR DAYS! WHEN WE.. LOCATE SOMEWHERE I'LL WRITE YOU, JOHNNY! GOOD-BYE!


FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS I PACKED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE--IT WAS DIFFICULT TO REALIZE THAT I WOULDN'T BE SEEING JOHNNY ANY MORE!

WE WERE ALL SET TO LEAVE! BUT THE EVENING BEFORE, JOHNNY CAME RUSHING IN --HE DIDN'T EVEN RING THE BELL!
MR. CRAINE-- MERLE! I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS! YOU TWO HAVE GOT TO COME OVER TO THE TOWN HALL RIGHT AWAY!
WHAT'S THAT, JOHNNY?


NOW COME ON--BOTH OF YOU! DO AS I ASK JUST THIS ONCE... PLEASE!
JOHNNY-- WHAT ON EARTH..

I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T LOST YOUR MIND, MY BOY!
HA! HA! DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT! AND I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE LEAVING AFTER THIS MEETING TONIGHT!

WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE TOWN HALL WE FOUND THAT JOHNNY HAD THE ENTIRE TOWN ASSEMBLED THERE! HE SPOKE TO THEM IMMEDIATELY...
THE WAR VETERANS OF CROTON HAVE CALLED THIS MEETING TO CLARIFY ONE POINT...THE INJUSTICE DEALT TO THE CRAINE FAMILY...
BOO!
BOO!
I'VE INVESTIGATED THE SO-CALLED POOR INVESTMENTS OF MR. CRAINE! IF YOU FOLKS CONSIDER US WAR VETERANS A POOR BUSINESS PROPOSITION, THEN YOU'RE ALL GUILTY...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, JOHNNY?
I MEAN THIS!... MR. CRAINE DIDN'T REJECT A SINGLE APPLICATION FOR A BANK LOAN FROM A VETERAN! AS A RESULT, HIS BANK FAILED! BUT WE VETERANS CAN AND WILL PAY BACK THOSE LOANS! HOW ABOUT IT?
LET'S GIVE THE CRAINE FAMILY ANOTHER CHANCE!
THEY DESERVE IT!
WELL, MR. CRAINE, I THINK YOU'RE BACK IN THE BANKING BUSINESS AGAIN! WE ALL WANT TO THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS...AND WE HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE US FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED!
THANK YOU ALL!
HURRAY! HURRAY!
OH, JOHNNY! WHAT YOU'VE DONE IS WONDERFUL! HOW CAN WE EVER THANK YOU AND REPAY YOU?
I THINK YOU'VE GOT THAT TWISTED! CROTON HAS GOT TO REPAY YOUR DAD FOR HIS KINDNESS! NOW THAT THIS IS OVER, PERHAPS WE CAN GET TOGETHER AND THINK ABOUT MATRIMONY!
THE END
9

Straight from the heart

IS ROMANCE PASSING YOU BY--OR LEADING YOUR HEART ASTRAY? SEND US YOUR LOVE PROBLEMS AND, PERHAPS, WE CAN HELP ROMANCE FIND ITS WAY--STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART!

Don't Make Love's Mistake Twice . . .

Dear Editors,

I am eighteen years old and have had little experience with men. The first boy I ever dated simply stopped taking me out a few months ago, and I have been waiting for him to call. I decided to accept other invitations, and since he has seen me out with other boys, he is interested again and has asked me out. Should I accept the date with him?

J. D. B.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear J. D. B.,

Evidently you still have a soft spot in your heart for this young man or there wouldn't be a problem. This is your opportunity to play hard-to-get, just as this young man did, when you sat patiently by the telephone. Don't be too eager to run back to him. Remember *he* did the jilting before, and now you should be more cautious.

Love—Long-Distance . . .

Dear Editors,

My boy friend works in Detroit and rarely writes or comes to see me. When he does come, however, he spends all of his time with me and tells me that he loves me. I'm only nineteen, and since there are boys who want to date me, I feel that I should go out more. Should I write him and break off with him?

H. J. D.
Columbus, Ohio.

Dear H. J. D.,

If this long-distant courtship isn't working satisfactorily, write that letter to Detroit and explain to him how you feel. There is no reason to break away from him completely, but you should have the right to date other boys too. There seems to be no hurry for you to settle down, so you might as well enjoy yourself while you can!

Romance Loses Its Spark . . .

Dear Editors,

My boy friend, Frankie, and I seem to disagree on everything. We've been dating steady for six months, but lately he says that I don't like him. I can't convince him that I do! All we do is fight on every date and we never have any fun. What should we do to stop these silly arguments?

J. N.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear J. N.,

If both you and Frankie are sacrificing your fun by going steady, perhaps it would be better for you both to relax your dating schedule. Why date steady if you both "disagree on everything" and apparently have lost your common interests? Why not take a short vacation for a couple of weeks to see if Frankie and you are happier apart or together. You might be surprised at the results!

Puzzled About Money . . .

Dear Editors,

I am seventeen years old and I come from a very wealthy family. That is my problem! All the fellows I know like my Buick convertible and swimming pool better than they do me. How can I make them like me for myself alone?

Puzzled
Lake Placid, N. Y.

Dear Puzzled,

You are perhaps too self-conscious about having a swimming pool and Buick convertible. These are wonderful luxuries to have and should present no problems. Certainly any boy or girl appreciates sharing these conveniences, but that doesn't mean that they just "put-up" with you because you have money. If you want to test their friendship, close the pool and put the car in the garage. You might discover that you don't need money to lure young men to your side!

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